



**RCN**

Professional Services

# RCN Credentialing for Advanced Level Nursing Practice

Handbook for applicants



Royal College  
of Nursing





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## Introduction

Nursing continues to develop and change: modern nursing practice has built on its traditional skills and knowledge base to enable it to be responsive to society's changing health care needs. The RCN, as the United Kingdom's professional body for nursing, helps promote, support and further develop the profession and assists nurses to obtain the recognition they deserve.

That is why the RCN is introducing a credentialing approach – formal recognition for each nurse, their colleagues, employers and most importantly, patients and the public, of the advanced level of expertise and skill that nurses

awarded the credential have achieved. This will be evidenced across the four pillars of: clinical practice, leadership, education and research. This is not about a job title; it is about recognising the level of practice a nurse is working at.

Advanced practice is characterised by the following principles:

- autonomous practice
- critical thinking
- high levels of decision-making and problem-solving
- values-based care
- improving practice (NES 2007).

## Eligibility

Any nurse who works at an advanced level of clinical practice, has non-medical prescribing rights and has an active registration with the NMC can apply.

Applications are open to members and non-members of the RCN.

Eligibility is linked solely to an applicant's ability to demonstrate that they meet our requirements for qualifications, experience and competence.

The initial credential is for three years.

The definition of advanced practice set out below, together with the advice provided, should help individuals to identify whether they meet the requirements for the credential.

### **RCN definition of advanced practice:**

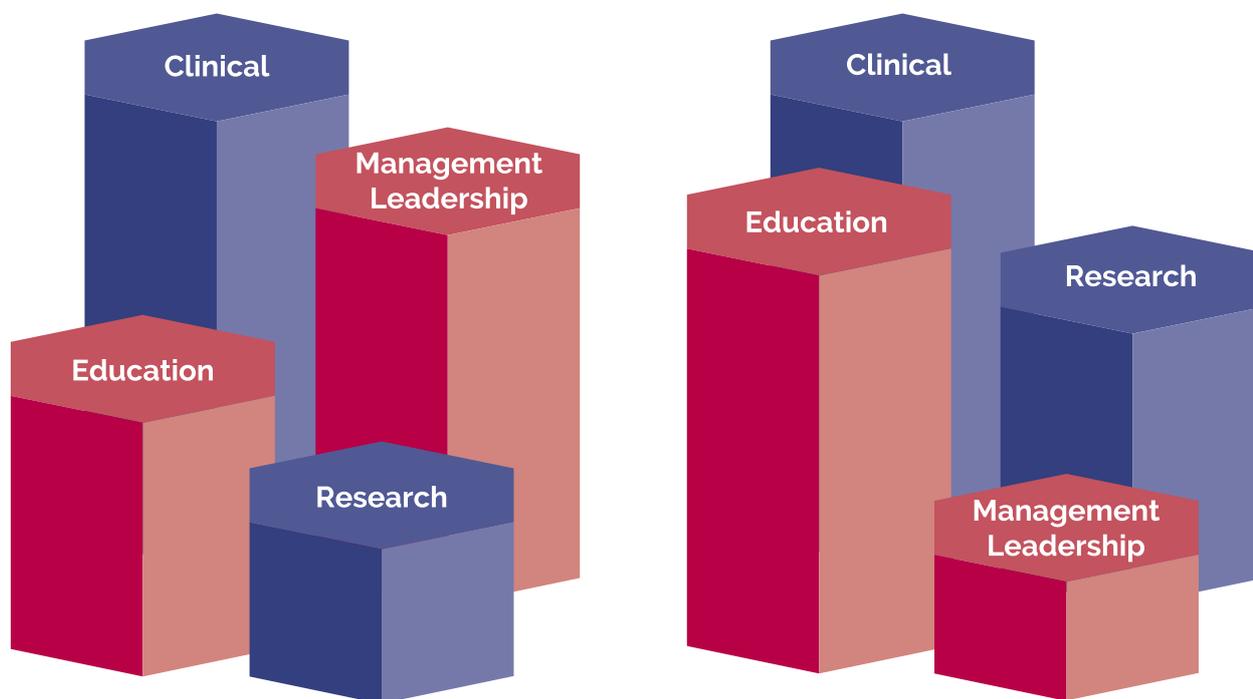
“Advanced practice is a level of practice, rather than a type of practice. Advanced Nurse Practitioners are educated at Masters Level in clinical practice and have been assessed as competent in practice using their expert clinical knowledge and skills. They have the freedom and authority to act, making autonomous decisions in the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of patients.”

There are many practitioners who function at an 'advanced' level but may not be working in a specifically clinical role. The RCN, and frameworks of the four countries of the UK, see advanced practice as a level of practice rather than a role or title; as well as clinical practice, a practitioner may be working in research, education or managerial/leadership roles. These four domains are the pillars of advanced practice and all advanced practice posts will contain some elements of each pillar.

Each of the pillars may be demonstrated in a variety of ways. With respect to research, for example, practitioners may not have a formal research remit, but may demonstrate how to identify research questions or implement research in practice. Similarly, practitioners may manage staff, services or resources. Education can be a formal part of practice linked to a higher education institution (HEI) or it may be less formal education in practice. However, for advanced practice clinical roles the clinical pillar will always be the most prominent.



Fig 1. The four pillars can combine in different ways depending on how and where you practise.



Source: NHS Wales Advanced Practice Framework (2010).

## Credentialing criteria

The RCN seeks to credential nurses who fulfil the criteria for advanced level practice, to recognise this level of practice, and to continue to develop the profession. Therefore a set of criteria that represents the very best in advanced level nursing practice has been developed:

- a relevant master's degree
- non-medical prescribing qualification
- experience and expertise mapped against the four pillars of advanced nursing practice
- a job plan that demonstrates current advanced level practice verified by a senior nurse/ employer
- a clinical reference verifying the applicant's clinical competence
- evidence of continued professional development related to advanced nursing practice over the previous three years
- a qualification in Health Assessment.

This stringent set of criteria will enable the nursing profession to be better recognised for excellent practice, endorse exceptional practice and create a development route for those nurses aspiring to work at an advanced level.

The RCN recognises that these requirements may exclude many nurses who currently adopt the title ANP/NP but are unable to meet the requirements of the credential. We have therefore created pathways (models) to enable these nurses to demonstrate their expertise and equivalencies for the criteria, or to acquire the additional skills and knowledge required. The transition pathways will be time-limited and available between January 2017 and December 2020.

Those nurses achieving the credential through the transitional pathway will NOT be required to achieve a full master's degree following cessation of the transitional arrangements in December

2020, as they will be deemed to have already met the criteria for the credential.

However, from January 2021 only full master's awards will be acceptable, as is already mandated in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and is an international standard.

The following pathways to credentialing (models A-E) set out below will assist you in deciding whether you meet the requirements. If you do not have the required evidence you should not submit an application, as it is unlikely to be successful and we are unable to refund your application fee.

You are advised to ensure your reference maps against the four pillars of advanced practice and is signed by a senior person. Templates for this purpose can be found in the appendices.

You must ensure that your job plan gives a detailed account of your daily work and not a brief description. For example, "working in surgery" or "working on medical ward" is not sufficient. The job plan must be verified by a senior clinical lead or your employer. In either case, the signatory must know your work and agree to be contacted if required. For transitional pathways, you may need to supply two referees' names. A template can be found in the appendices. The reference and job plan must not be signed by the same person.

Please submit documentary evidence if your name differs on transcripts or certificates.

If you need help understanding the requirements or the acceptable forms of evidence for each, you can contact us at [credentialing@rcn.org.uk](mailto:credentialing@rcn.org.uk) with your questions.



## Pathways to achieving the RCN Advanced Level Nursing Credential

**MODEL A: RCN Accredited MSc in Advanced Practice (or comparable e.g. nationally commissioned Northern Irish, Scottish or Welsh Masters award)**

| Qualification                            | Experience  | Competence   | Evidence   | Check |
|--|---|--|--|-------|
| MSc/Master's Advanced Practice           | Successful completion of final year of MSc ANP is the consolidation and experience period whilst in clinical practice and is minimal level of experience. |  | Transcript/certificate of successful achievement.<br>NMC PIN   |       |
| NMC recordable prescribing qualification |   |  | NMC statement of entry/certificate of successful achievement.  |       |
|  | Currently employed/self-employed as advanced level nurse working in accordance with the four pillars of advanced practice.                                |  | Current, detailed completed job plan verified by employer/clinical lead. (This is not the job description, but a description of the actual roles carried out by the ALNP in a typical week/month.)   |       |
|  | Two examples of evidence of CPD related to advanced clinical practice within previous three years.  |  | Evidence for revalidation purposes demonstrating advanced level practice is acceptable or two reflective pieces related to ALNP level practice.  |       |
|  |   | Assessed as competent in practice – local assessment using country-specific framework assessed by clinical lead. | Completed, current, detailed job plan signed by employer/clinical lead. (This is not the job description, but a description of the actual roles carried out by the ALNP in a typical week.)<br><br>Clinical reference signed by a senior clinician different from the person who signs the job plan. |       |

**Model B: Master's degree in advanced practice, not accredited by the RCN**

| Qualification                            | Experience   | Competence   | Evidence   | Check |
|--|--|--|--|-------|
| Master's degree transcripts              |  |  | Transcripts or certificates of successful completion of programme mapped against the four pillars of advanced practice.<br><br>NMC PIN   |       |
| NMC recordable prescribing qualification |  |  | NMC statement of entry/certificate of successful achievement.  |       |
|  |  |  | Current, detailed completed job plan verified by employer/clinical lead. (This is not the job description, but a description of the actual roles carried out by the ALNP in a typical week/month.)   |       |
|  | Two examples of evidence of CPD related to advanced clinical practice within the previous three years. |  | Evidence for revalidation purposes demonstrating advanced level practice is acceptable and/or two reflective pieces related to ALNP level practice.  |       |
|  |  | Assessed as competent in practice – local assessment using country-specific framework assessed by clinical lead. | Completed, detailed, current job plan signed by employer/clinical leader. (This is not the job description, but a description of the actual roles carried out by the ALNP in a typical week.)<br><br>Clinical reference signed by a senior clinician different from the person signing the job plan. |       |



### MODEL C: Full masters with clinical focus (MA, MSc, MBA)

| Qualification   | Experience   | Competence  | Evidence  | Check |
|---|--|---|---|-------|
| Master's degree<br>Health Assessment module at level 6 or 7 |  |   | Transcripts or certificates of successful completion of programme mapped against the four pillars of advanced practice NMC PIN.   |       |
| NMC recordable prescribing qualification                    |  |   | NMC statement of entry/ certificate of successful achievement   |       |
|   |  |   | Current, detailed completed job plan verified by employer/ clinical lead. (This is not the job description, but a description of the actual roles carried out by the ALNP in a typical week/ month.)  |       |
|   | Two examples of evidence of CPD related to advanced clinical practice in previous three years. |   | Evidence for revalidation purposes demonstrating advanced level practice is acceptable and/or two reflective pieces related to ALNP level practice.   |       |
|   |  | Assessed as competent in practice – local assessment using country-specific framework assessed by clinical lead | Completed, detailed, current job plan signed by employer/ clinical leader. (This is not the job description, but a description of the actual roles carried out by the ALNP in a typical week.)<br>Clinical reference signed by a senior clinician different from the person signing the job plan. |       |

**MODEL D: TRANSITIONAL CRITERIA UNTIL DECEMBER 2020 – Demonstrating Masters Level experience**

| Qualification  | Experience   | Competence  | Evidence  | Check |
|--|--|---|---|-------|
| L7 credits<br>L 6 credits<br>Health Assessment module (Level 6 or 7) |  |   | Transcripts/ certificates of successful completion.<br>NMCPIN<br>Portfolio of evidence mapped against four pillars of advanced practice includes a reflective statement of 1000 words demonstrating evidence of achievement of meeting the descriptor for Higher Education Qualifications at level 7 (or level 11 on the Scottish Qualifications Framework, section) in full . The descriptors can be found below. The reflection must also demonstrate application of the four pillars of advanced practice & will be marked at masters level. |       |
| NMC recordable prescribing qualification (Level 6 or 7)              |  |   | NMC statement of entry/certificate of successful achievement.   |       |
|  | One year post-prescribing qualification.<br>Currently working at advanced level in accordance with the four pillars of advanced practice |   | Current, detailed completed job plan verified by employer/clinical lead. (This is not the job description, but a description of the actual roles carried out by the ALNP in a typical week/ month.)   |       |
|  | Two examples of evidence of CPD related to advanced clinical practice in previous three years.   |   | Evidence for revalidation purposes demonstrating advanced clinical practice is acceptable or two reflective pieces related to ALNP level practice.  |       |
|  |  | Assessed as competent in practice- local assessment using country-specific framework assessed by clinical lead. | A clinical reference, including reference to the published advanced practice framework used in the assessment in the workplace or in the programme transcript and the four pillars of advanced practice.<br>Signed by a senior clinician different to the person signing the job plan.  |       |



# Mapping to the Higher Education Qualifications at level 7 (or level 11 on the Scottish Qualifications Framework)<sup>1</sup>

For those applicants who have not completed a full master's degree programme you have the opportunity for a transitional period only to write a 1,000 word reflective statement demonstrating how you believe you meet the descriptors outlined below for Higher Education Qualifications at level 7, or level 11 on the Scottish Qualifications Framework or, from April 2018, the apprenticeship model.

We are particularly interested in how you demonstrate the following achievements:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level
- have the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
  - The exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
  - Decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
  - The independent the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

## FOR INFORMATION

**Master's degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:**

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student:
  - To evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
  - To evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

**Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:**

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level

<sup>1</sup> The UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Part A. Available from: [www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-a](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/assuring-standards-and-quality/the-quality-code/quality-code-part-a)

- Continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.

**And holders will have:**

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
  - The exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
  - Decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
  - The independent the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

## REFERENCES

*The UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Part A.*  
Available from: [www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/qualifications-frameworks.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/qualifications-frameworks.pdf)

For those applicants who are unable to provide transcripts of qualifications due to the HEI Nurse Practitioner programme no longer being available a letter to the university is attached at appendix eight.



## Renewing the credential

The initial credential period is three years.

After this time, renewal is required for a further three years; there is a fee for renewal.

The RCN credentialing team will notify the advanced level nurse by email eight weeks before the credential is due to expire that they must renew, so that their name can remain on the database.

In order to renew the credential for a further three years the ALNP will be required to produce the following:

- a current, detailed job plan signed by a senior clinician/employer who can verify that this is a true reflection of the ALNP's clinical practice in a typical week
- a clinical reference signed by a different senior clinician /employer verifying that the ALNP is working at a level of practice commensurate with the requirements of the four pillars of advanced practice
- evidence of CPD in the previous three years related to the advanced level nursing role (two pieces)

- a statement to the effect that the ALNP is not under investigation/disciplinary procedures from the NMC and/or their employer.

It is expected that the ALNP practises, at all times, in accordance with the NMC Code (2015) and will notify the RCN credentialing team at **credentialing@rcn.org.uk**

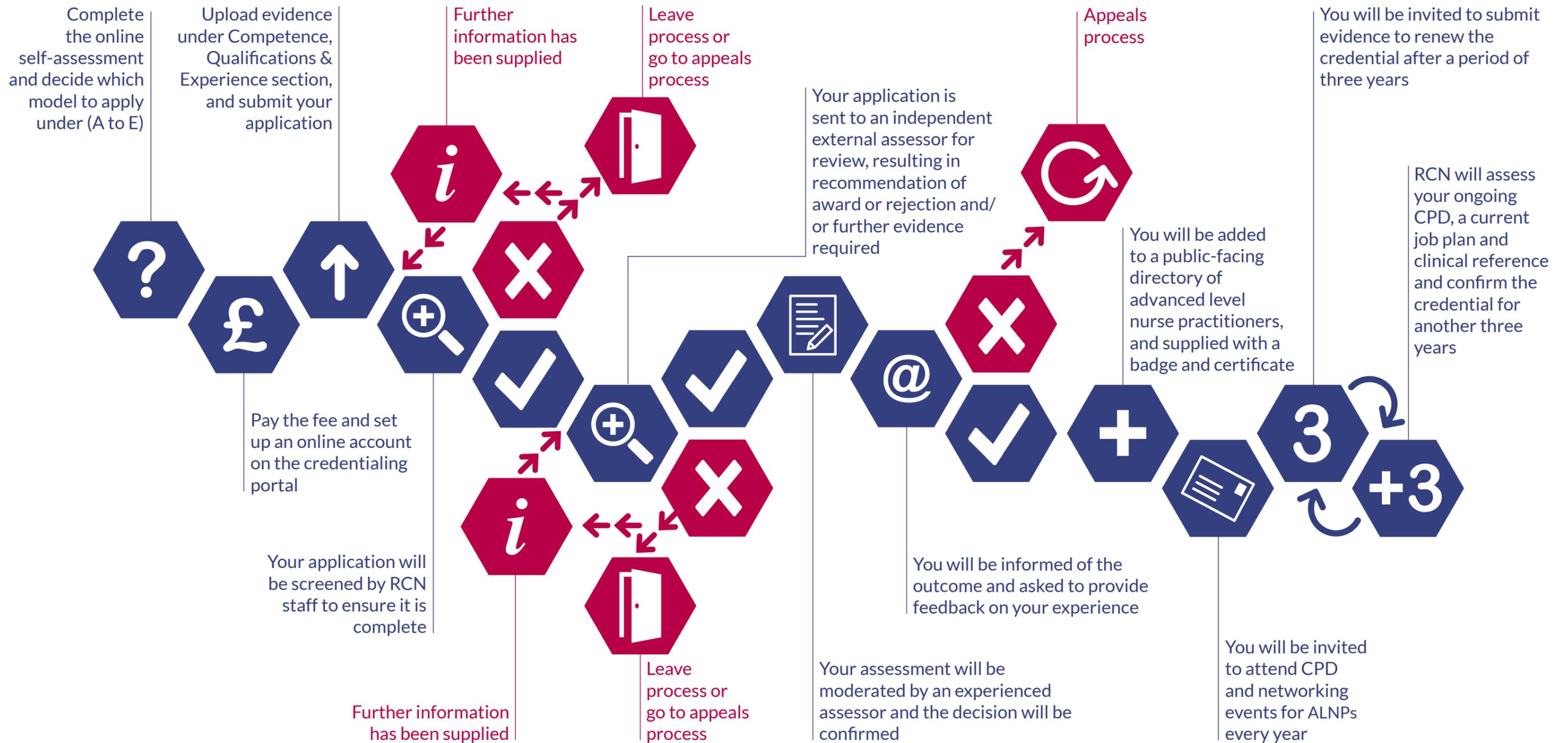
The material submitted for the re-credential will be scrutinised by an external assessor from the RCN's Approved List of Credentialing Assessors. The assessor's decision will be final.

Should the ALNP no longer meet the criteria for the credential, or if there is sound reason for doing so, the ALNP's name will be removed from the database.



# The assessment process

## A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO RCN CREDENTIALING



## References

DHSSPS (2016) *Advanced Nursing Practice Framework, Supporting Advanced Nursing Practice in Health and Social Care Trusts*.

NHS Scotland *Advanced Practice Toolkit*  
[www.advancedpractice.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.advancedpractice.scot.nhs.uk)

NLIAH & GIGC/NHSW (2016) *Framework for Advanced Nursing, Midwifery and Allied Health Professional Practice in Wales*.

RCN (2010) *Advanced Nurse Practitioners, An RCN Guide to Advanced Nursing Practice, Advanced Nurse Practitioners and Programme Accreditation*.

Northern Ireland Supporting Advanced Practice in Health and Social Care (2014)  
[www.advancedpractice.scot.nhs.uk/definitions/defining-advanced-practice.aspx](http://www.advancedpractice.scot.nhs.uk/definitions/defining-advanced-practice.aspx)

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2015) *The Code: Standards of practice and behaviours for nurses and midwives*, London: NMC.

## Appeals and complaints

If you are unsuccessful in your application for the RCN Advanced Level Nurse Credential, you may appeal within 14 days if you believe the assessors have failed to assess your application correctly. If you appeal, we will ask you to complete a “grounds for appeal form” ([www.rcn.org.uk/contact/complaints-form](http://www.rcn.org.uk/contact/complaints-form)). This, along with your original application, will be considered by a new assessor, and moderated by a third assessor whose decision will be final. Complaints will be managed in accordance with the RCN’s complaints policy.

[www.rcn.org.uk/contact/rcn-customer-promise](http://www.rcn.org.uk/contact/rcn-customer-promise)



## Appendix one: RCN Advanced Nurse Credential Application: clinical referee

All RCN ANP Credential applicants need to identify a clinical referee who is a doctor (Registrar level or above) or qualified Advanced Nurse Practitioner or equivalent, who has been working in the same organisation and setting as you for a minimum of one year, and who is willing to confirm your advanced clinical practice. This template must be used along with the reference template and sent electronically with your application form to [rcn.org.uk/credentialing](http://rcn.org.uk/credentialing)

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Applicant's name  |  |
| NMC PIN   |  |
| Clinical referee's name   |  |
| Clinical referee's role   |  |
| Clinical referee's work address   |  |
| Telephone number  |  |
| Email   |  |
| Length of time working in the practice setting with this applicant  |  |
| Professional registration details, qualifications and experience  |  |
| I confirm that I am happy to act as clinical referee for.....<br>in support of their application for the RCN Advanced Level Nursing Practice Credential.<br>I understand that I may be contacted for further information if required. |  |
| Signed  |  |
| Designation   |  |
| Date  |  |

## Appendix two: Reference template

### ROYAL COLLEGE OF NURSING, ADVANCED LEVEL NURSING PRACTICE

The Royal College of Nursing (2012) defines Advanced Practice as:

“Advanced practice is a level of practice, rather than a type of practice. Advanced Nurse Practitioners are educated at Masters Level in clinical practice and have been assessed as competent in practice using their expert clinical knowledge and skills. They have the freedom and authority to act, making autonomous decisions in the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of patients.”

Advanced level nursing practice must encompass all aspects of this definition, in order to be credentialed by the RCN. The Department of Health (2010) states that:

“Advanced level practice encompasses aspects of education, research and management but is firmly grounded in direct care provision.”

This statement reflects the four pillars of advanced practice, which are integral to advanced level nursing and are manifest to varying extents depending on the nurse’s responsibilities and work setting. However, clinical care must be the main focus. This reflects the themes and the underpinning principles in the NHS Wales Advanced Practice Framework (2010), Department of Health Advanced Level Practice: A Position Statement (2010), Northern Ireland Supporting Advanced Practice in Health and Social Care (2014) and NHS Education for Scotland (NES 2007), all of which strengthen the case for benchmarking of this level of practice:

- autonomous practice
- critical thinking
- high levels of decision-making and problem-solving
- value-based care
- improving practice.

Source:

[www.advancedpractice.scot.nhs.uk/definitions/advanced-practice-as-a-level-of-practice.aspx](http://www.advancedpractice.scot.nhs.uk/definitions/advanced-practice-as-a-level-of-practice.aspx)



## CLINICAL REFERENCE FOR:

Applicant's name:

NMC PIN:

Applicant's professional registration and academic achievements:

**Please describe the applicant's work in relation to each of the following pillars of advanced nursing practice:**

Clinical (please outline how the applicant works at an advanced level using the criteria in the definition above):

Leadership/management (please describe how the applicant demonstrates the leadership role):

Facilitation of learning (please describe how the applicant is involved in the facilitation of learning, for example teaching and training, supervision):

Evidence, research and development (please demonstrate how the applicant is involved in evidence-based practice, research and practice development):

### **To be signed by organisational clinical lead**

I hereby confirm that

is competent to work at an advanced level of nursing practice in accordance with the criteria set out above.

Name:

Signature:

Designation:

Date:

## Appendix three: Job plan

### ROYAL COLLEGE OF NURSING ADVANCED LEVEL NURSING CREDENTIALING: JOB PLAN

Please complete the table below showing your work for a typical week. The job plan **MUST** be detailed and **MUST** reflect the four pillars of advanced level practice. E.g.: clinical practice, education, management/leadership, and research/evidence-based practice. The work you do in relation to these pillars will vary from day to day and in relation to the work you are doing; however, clinical practice needs to be the main focus.

#### References

NHS Wales Advanced Practice Framework (2010)

Department of Health Advanced Level Practice: A Position Statement (2010)

Northern Ireland Supporting Advanced Practice in Health and Social Care (2014)

NHS Education for Scotland (NES 2007)

Source:

[www.advancedpractice.scot.nhs.uk/definitions/advanced-practice-as-a-'level'-of-practice.aspx](http://www.advancedpractice.scot.nhs.uk/definitions/advanced-practice-as-a-'level'-of-practice.aspx)

| Monday    | morning | afternoon | evening | night | Comments |
|-----------|---------|-----------|---------|-------|----------|
| Tuesday   | morning | afternoon | evening | night |          |
| Wednesday | morning | afternoon | evening | night |          |
| Thursday  | morning | afternoon | evening | night |          |
| Friday    | morning | afternoon | evening | night |          |
| Saturday  | morning | afternoon | evening | night |          |
| Sunday    | morning | afternoon | evening | night |          |



|  |  |
|--|--|
| Would you like to make any further comments about your job plan?   |  |
| <b>I confirm that this is a true reflection of my work for a typical week:</b>   |  |
| Name   |  |
| Signature  |  |
| Date   |  |
| <b>Verification:<br/>By a line manager, clinical lead or senior colleague who understands the nature of your work.</b> |  |
| I confirm that this is a true reflection of (insert above's name) .....<br>work for a typical week                     |  |
| Name   |  |
| Signature  |  |
| Designation  |  |
| Date   |  |

## Appendix four: RCN Accredited Advanced Nurse Practice (ANP/NP) programmes as at January 2018

| Name of university                 | Course title  |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Anglia Ruskin University           | PG Dip/MSc Advanced Nursing Practice  |
| University of Bradford             | PG Dip/MSc Advanced Practice  |
| City University London             | MSc Advanced Practice in Health and Social Care (Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Adult, Child and Neonate)   |
| University of Cumbria              | PG Dip/MSc Advanced Practice (Clinical)   |
| University of Hertfordshire        | MSc Contemporary Nursing (Advanced Practice)  |
| London South Bank University       | PG Dip/MSc Advanced Clinical Practice<br>PG Dip/MSc Children's Advanced Nurse Practitioner<br>PG Dip/MSc Advanced Neonatal Nurse Practitioner<br>PG Dip/MSc Advanced Nurse Practitioner (Mental Health) |
| Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen | MSc Advancing Nursing Practice  |



## Appendix five: Descriptor for a higher education qualification at level 7

### DESCRIPTOR FOR A HIGHER EDUCATION QUALIFICATION AT LEVEL 7 ON THE FHEQ AND SCQF LEVEL 11 ON THE FQHEIS: MASTER'S DEGREE

Master's degrees are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at the forefront of, or informed by, their academic discipline, field of study or area of professional practice
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques applicable to their own research or advanced scholarship
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline
- conceptual understanding that enables the student to:
  - critically evaluate current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline
  - evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level.

And holders will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
  - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility
  - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations
  - the independent learning ability necessary for continuing professional development.

Much of the study undertaken for master's degrees is at the forefront of, or informed by, an academic or professional discipline. Successful students show originality in the application of knowledge, and they understand how the boundaries of knowledge are advanced through research. They are able to deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, and they show originality in tackling and solving problems. They have the qualities needed for employment in circumstances requiring sound judgement, personal responsibility and initiative in complex and unpredictable professional environments.

Master's degrees are awarded after completion of taught courses, programmes of research or a mixture of both. Longer, research-based programmes may lead to the degree of MPhil. The learning outcomes of most master's degree courses are achieved on the basis of study equivalent to at least one full-time calendar year and are taken by graduates with a bachelor's degree with honours (or equivalent achievement).

Masters degrees are often distinguished from other qualifications at this framework level (for example, advanced short courses, which often form parts of continuing professional development programmes and lead to postgraduate certificates and/or postgraduate diplomas) by an increased intensity, complexity

and density of study. Master's degrees, in comparison to postgraduate certificates and postgraduate diplomas, typically include planned intellectual progression that often includes a synoptic/research or scholarly activity.

[www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/qualifications-frameworks.pdf](http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/qualifications-frameworks.pdf)



## Appendix six: Template for mapping qualifications to four pillars (Model B & C)

Please cross reference your qualifications/master's modules to all of the following sections:

|   |
|---|
| <b>Clinical practice</b><br><i>Please reference health assessment course and prescribing</i>  |
|   |
| <b>Leadership</b><br><i>This may be standalone (not necessarily academic) or a module. It may be an independent study module where you demonstrated clinical leadership</i> |
|   |
| <b>Education/facilitation of learning</b><br><i>E.g. mentorship/teaching module/course</i>  |
|   |
| <b>Research/evidence based practice</b><br><i>This may be dissertation or project as part of masters etc.</i>   |
|   |

## Appendix seven: Frequently asked questions

### WHAT IS CREDENTIALING?

Credentialing recognises a nurse's ability to practise at an advanced level. It is an opportunity for nurses to demonstrate their qualifications, expertise and competence in their clinical practice, their leadership, their education and their research. It also enables them to enhance and develop their career prospects and to continue their personal and professional development.

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO CREDENTIAL?

Any nurse who works at an advanced level of practice, has non-medical prescribing rights and has an active registration with the NMC can apply, and will be successful if they demonstrate that they meet our requirements by supplying the necessary evidence.

Eligibility is linked solely to your ability to demonstrate that you meet our requirements for qualifications, experience and competence, and not, for example, your job title. The definition of advanced practice set out below should also help you identify if you meet the requirements.

The RCN definition is as follows:

“Advanced practice is a level of practice, rather than a type of practice. Advanced Nurse Practitioners are educated at Masters Level in clinical practice and have been assessed as competent in practice using their expert clinical knowledge and skills. They have the freedom and authority to act, making autonomous decisions in the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of patients.”

### I CURRENTLY HOLD A BSC NURSE PRACTITIONER AWARD – DO I NOW NEED TO STUDY FOR A MASTER'S IN ADVANCED NURSING PRACTICE?

Until December 2020, there are transitional arrangements in place so that any nurses who don't currently meet the criteria for credentialing and are undertaking advanced level practice

can apply for the credential on submission of evidence demonstrating that the RCN criteria for advanced level nursing are met.

If you have a question about whether you are eligible, please email [credentialing@rcn.org.uk](mailto:credentialing@rcn.org.uk)

### WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO TO GAIN THE CREDENTIAL?

Nurses will need to show that they are operating at an advanced level of practice by demonstrating evidence and experience in four areas: clinical practice, leadership, teaching and research. However, clinical practice must be the main focus.

They will also need to show evidence of a job plan that demonstrates current advanced level practice and provides evidence of practice in the four areas above. This will need to be verified by a senior nurse or employer, who will provide a clinical reference confirming their clinical competence and showing evidence of CPD.

### WHO ASSESSES WHETHER YOU ARE ELIGIBLE FOR CREDENTIALING?

The RCN will assess credentialing. A team of people who have been involved in developing the credentialing process will assess the evidence to determine whether a nurse has sufficient evidence and expertise to gain the credential. Assessors are selected for their knowledge, skills and expertise in the subject area of the material submitted for credentialing.

### WHAT HAPPENS ONCE I AM CREDENTIALLED?

Those who are successful in credentialing will be included on a public-facing, searchable directory, and will receive a badge and certificate. The credential will be renewed every three years.



## WHY ARE ONLY NURSES AT ADVANCED LEVEL ELIGIBLE?

At present credentialing is only open to nurses practicing at an advanced level, but if it is successful, the RCN will extend it to other nursing specialisms.

## I ATTENDED AN RCN-ACCREDITED UNIVERSITY – DOES THAT MEAN I HAVE THE CREDENTIALS ALREADY?

From April 2017, nurses who successfully achieve the full master's qualification, including non-medical prescribing, from an RCN accredited university will have the credential awarded for the first three years. The re-credentialing process will accord with all other re-credentialing criteria.

## HOW IS CREDENTIALING DIFFERENT TO ACCREDITATION?

Credentialing is a way of recognising an individual nurse's competence to practice at an advanced level. Accreditation is a way of recognising a particular course of study or institution providing the programme.

## HOW DOES CREDENTIALING LINK TO NMC REVALIDATION?

NMC revalidation recognises your ability to practise as a registered nurse or midwife and maintain active registration on the NMC Professional Register of Nurses and Midwives. This is a statutory requirement. Credentialing is a way of recognising competence to practise at a particular level. It is an RCN initiative and is not mandatory for registration with the NMC, nor for revalidation. Evidence you use for your CPD in revalidation can also be used as evidence in credentialing and re-credentialing.

## HOW MUCH DOES CREDENTIALING COST?

Inclusion on the database will incur a cost. The initial assessment will be £275, with renewal (after three year cycle) being £125. Prices include VAT.

## WHY IS THERE A COST WHEN I ALREADY PAY NMC AND RCN FEES?

Like many other professional qualifications, the process of credentialing, including assessment and inclusion on the register, incurs a cost. Gaining a credential is separate to your registration with the NMC and your membership of the RCN. Moreover, credentialing is available to non-RCN members.

## WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T PASS THE CREDENTIAL ASSESSMENT?

If you are unsuccessful in your application for the credential you will not be added to the database but you will incur charges. You can re-apply for credentialing at any time on submission of further evidence and payment of a credentialing fee.

## IF I AM UNSUCCESSFUL IN MY CREDENTIALING APPLICATION BUT AM STILL EMPLOYED WITH A JOB TITLE AS AN ANP WILL THE RCN STILL PROVIDE INDEMNITY FOR ME?

Please refer to the RCN website regarding indemnity:  
[www.rcn.org.uk/get-help/indemnity-scheme](http://www.rcn.org.uk/get-help/indemnity-scheme)

## WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT ME TO DEVELOP AS AN ADVANCED LEVEL NURSE?

The RCN website has useful publications to support nursing innovation and advanced practice. The RCN ANP Forum is a useful group to join.



Royal College  
of Nursing

The RCN represents nurses and nursing, promotes  
excellence in practice and shapes health policies

## RCN CREDENTIALING

[www.rcn.org.uk/credentialing](http://www.rcn.org.uk/credentialing)

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